DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 454 933 JC 010 526

TITLE	Standards of Practice for Psychological Services in California Community Colleges.
PUB DATE	1999-02-00
NOTE	16p.; Published by the California Community Colleges Psychological Services Consortium. Reprinted from the "Journal of Counseling & Development," volume 73, September/October 1994, pages 38-43, copyright American Counseling Association.
PUB TYPE	Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Role; *Community Colleges; Confidentiality; *Counseling Objectives; Crisis Intervention; Ethics; *Guidance Centers; Mental Health; *Outreach Programs; Privacy; *Psychological Services; *Student Behavior; Student Characteristics; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*California Community Colleges

ABSTRACT

This paper, taken directly from the Accreditation Standards for University and College Counseling Centers published in the "Journal of Counseling and Development" (1994), delineates the standards that providers of psychological services in California community colleges must adhere to. Five pertinent areas are discussed: (1) the relationship of psychological services to the college community; (2) the functions of psychological services; (3) the ethical and legal standards of practice; (4) personnel qualifications and duties; and (5) related guidelines. The number and severity of personal problems students bring to campus have increased dramatically over the past 20 years. Traditionally, community colleges have linked psychological services with academic and career concerns. However, it is important to assure the student that psychological services are not linked with administrative decisions. Psychological services should provide three essential functions: treatment, psycho-education, and consultation. To this end, a comprehensive program should provide the following: (1) individual and group counseling; (2) crisis intervention; (3) outreach programming; and (4) consultation. Community college psychological services need to adhere to professional legal and ethical standards, clarifying what these standards are with regard to confidentiality, administration of tests, research practices, records, and other issues. Also, psychological personnel should be given rights and privileges consistent with community college faculty. (NB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 454 933

Standards of Practice for Psychological Services in California Community Colleges

Published by the
California Community Colleges
Psychological Services Consortium

February 1999

TC010526

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
R. Beyer
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Most of the language for this document is taken directly from the Accreditation Standards for University and College Counseling Centers published in the Journal of Counseling and Development (1994). The accreditation standards outlined in that article are used by the International Association of Counseling Services, Inc. as the basis for the formal accreditation of college and university counseling programs throughout the United States and Canada. They reflect the program elements and practice standards that are deemed essential in a counseling center that provides high quality services to students.

STANDARDS

A. Psychological Services: Relationship to the College Community
B. The Functions of Psychological Services
    1. Individual and Group Psychological Counseling
    2. Crisis Intervention
    3. Outreach Programming
    4. Consultation Services
    5. Training
    6. Program Evaluation/Research
C. Ethical and Legal Standards of Practice
    1. Confidentiality
    2. Mandated Reporting
    3. Psychological Tests
    4. Psychological Research
    5. Records
    6. Support Staff
    7. Selected References: Professional and Ethical Standards
D. Personnel
    1. Professional Staff
    2. Status of Professional Staff within the Community College
    3. Qualifications and Competencies: Director of Psychological Services
    4. Duties: Director
    5. Qualifications and Competencies: Professional Staff
    6. Duties: Professional Staff
    7. Duties: Interns and Trainees
    8. Support Staff
E. Related Guidelines
    1. Professional Development
    2. Staffing Practices
    3. Physical Facilities

* "Reprinted from the Journal of Counseling & Development, Volume 73, September/October 1994, pages 38-43 © ACA. Reprinted with permission. No further reproduction authorized without written permission of the American Counseling Association." Revised 2/24/99.

A.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES: RELATIONSHIP TO THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

The last 20 years have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number and severity of personal problems that students bring to the community college campus, i.e. depressive illness, family violence, eating disorders and alcohol/substance abuse.

Traditionally, community college counseling services have been designed very differently from university counseling services. While the focus of university counseling has been psychological services, the focus of community college counseling has combined the domains of academic, career, and personal counseling. It is this last domain that has changed most dramatically as the acuity of students' personal issues has increased, requiring specialized clinical skills.

Psychological services are an integral part of the educational mission of the institution and support it in a variety of ways. Licensed mental health clinicians provide clinical and counseling services to clients who are experiencing stress due to personal problems, decision-making, or conflicts within the campus community. Clinicians are also advocates for student needs, program development, teaching, and consultation activities that support the efforts of faculty and staff in improving the community college environment. Examples of these types of services include the establishment of crisis intervention teams, classes for faculty on mental health issues, and employee assistance services.

Although the relationship of psychological services to other units within the institution will vary according to organizational structure and individual campus needs, it is critically important that the service be administratively neutral. If it is perceived as being linked with units that are involved in making admissions, disciplinary, curricular, or other administrative decisions, it can severely restrict the utilization of the service. Such perceptions may prevent students from seeking services for fear that information they disclose may negatively affect their college careers.

At present time, psychological services at community college campuses are at a unique crossroad. At some campus, psychological services have been around for twenty years. On other campuses, limited services are provided by The Disabled Student Program and Services (DSP&S) as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title V. While services may be increasingly acknowledged, to achieve further recognition, psychological services must develop an extensive network of institutional and community relationships. Close linkages should be forged between academic units, campus student service offices, and sources of referral and consultation. Solid working relationships must be maintained with campus and community health services and mental health services to accommodate clients with medical problems or a need for hospitalization. Community and mental health services professionals should work with faculty and administrators in promoting the goal of psychological health and emotional well being in the many aspects of campus life.

Finally, it is essential that psychological services work closely with the chief student services officer and other key administrators to ensure the accomplishment of institutional goals and objectives. The chief student services officer, as well as other senior administrative staff, should pursue the finances that support a program that is comprehensive.

Although psychological services work in an interrelated manner with many aspects of the campus community, it is important to emphasize the unique role that it plays within the institution. Specifically, it provides services such as crisis intervention, individual and group psychotherapy, and consultation with the campus community about student characteristics and development. In addition, psychological services professionals often provide a needed perspective for campus administrators in maintaining an appropriate balance between an administrative and humanistic approach in managing students with disruptive behavior.

B. THE FUNCTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Psychological Services should provide three essential functions in serving the college community. The most prominent function is Treatment: providing psychological counseling to students experiencing personal adjustment problems that require professional attention The second major function is Psycho-education: outreach activities to assist students in learning healthy personal and interpersonal skills to meet their educational and life goals. And the third function is Consultation: contributing to a campus environment that facilitates the healthy growth and development of students. A comprehensive Psychological Services program provides the following:

1. Individual and Group Counseling

    a. Individual psychological counseling should address personal, educational, career, relationship, or social problems as appropriate

    b. Group psychological counseling should help students become more effective in interpersonal relationships, learn communication skills, and enhance decision-making skills

    c. Administration of psychological tests and other assessment techniques, when appropriate, to foster student self-understanding and decision-making

    d. Specific services to traditionally under served populations such as ethnic and cultural minorities and non-traditional students

2. Crisis Intervention

    a. Psychological services may provide emergency services for students who are experiencing acute emotional distress, are a danger to self or others, or are in need of immediate hospitalization. Such services may be provided by other agencies on campus or off-campus in the local community

    b. Psychological services staff should work closely with other service providers to ensure full and active use of referral resources

3. Outreach Programming

    Programs should be developed and provided that help students acquire new skills, encourage positive and realistic self-appraisal, foster appropriate personal and occupational choices, enhance the ability to relate mutually and meaningfully with others, and increase the capacity to engage ina personally satisfying and effective style of living. These programs should be designed to meet the needs of all students and be able to respond to the sexual orientation, and cultural

and ethnic diversity among students as well as reach students who are less likely to make use of traditional counseling services.

4. Consultation

   a. Psychological services must play an active role in interpreting and, when appropriate, advocating the needs of students to administration, faculty and staff of the institution. Psychological services may design and carry out consultation activities to provide data and programmatic interventions to foster student success within the college environment. This may be accomplished by serving on college committees, conducting research and disseminating research outcomes to the college community. Consultation and in service professional development are appropriate services to provide to students, faculty, administration and staff

   b. Consultation regarding individual students, as requested or needed by staff, are governed by ethical and legal standards. A release signed by the student within the limits of the law must always be obtained prior to discussing the student in any way with a third party

   c. Consultation services involving disciplinary actions may be provided; however, final decisions rest with the administration

   d. Consultation may provide procedures for the general assessment of student needs in all aspects of student-life planning

C. ETHICAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Professional legal and ethical practice forms the cornerstone of psychological services. Maintaining ethical standards and abiding by related laws in the administration of psychological services are very complex and important tasks. Clear definitions of ethical and legal questions are not universally applicable, so an understanding of ethical codes and relevant case and statutory law is essential. Psychological services should have access to legal counsel and should keep staff well informed regarding legal issues.

Providers of psychological services must maintain strict adherence to the ethical standard codes of their respective professional organizations, such as the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, the American Nursing Association, and the National Association of Social Workers.

1. The confidential nature of the psychological counseling relationship must be consistent with professional ethical standards and with local, state, and federal statutes. Typically, information can be released only with the written authorization of a student who has full and informed knowledge of the nature of the information being released. Appropriate information should then be released selectively and only to qualified recipients. Minor students require parental consent.

2. When the condition of the student is indicative of clear and imminent danger to self or others, psychological service professionals must take reasonable action that may involve informing responsible authorities and, when possible and appropriate, consulting with other professionals. In such cases, psychological services professionals must be cognizant of existing ethical principles, relevant statutes, and local mental health guidelines that may stipulate the limits of confidentiality. Services should provide a written statement to students that describes the limits of confidentiality, ordinarily including but not limited to the following: statutes that require the reporting of child or elder/dependent adult abuse, and statutes or case laws that stipulate making appropriate notification when students or others are at risk.

3. Procedures regarding the administration of psychological tests and the preparation, use, and distribution of psychological test data and reports must be consistent with professional standards.

4. Standards regarding psychological research with students must be maintained. Review procedures for proposed research should be established to ensure that research efforts do not interfere unduly with the rights of the research participants and the service delivery responsibilities of the psychological services.

5. Records

   a. Systematic case records must be maintained as required by professional standards and applicable statutes. The record must include intake and assessment information, case notes, termination summary and results of any psychological tests or inventories. If records are computerized, confidentiality of data files must be ensured. Full records must be kept for three years following termination of services, and a summary of services rendered should be kept for an additional 12 years.

   b. Procedures for the disposition of student records should be consistent with California laws, professional standards, and college guidelines.

   c. Access to counseling records must be limited to psychological services staff on a need-to-know basis. An informed release of information must be obtained from the student before records can be shared with any staff of other college offices or departments.

   d. Records should be kept in a central secure area in locked file cabinets.

   e. While students have access to their case records, the records are the property of psychological services.

6. Support and other staff must be selected carefully and trained thoroughly regarding confidentiality and appropriate policies and procedures.

7. Selected References: Professional and Ethical Standards

American College Personnel Association. (1989). A statement of ethical principles and practices. (rev.). Alexandria, VA: American Association for Counseling and Development.

American Counseling Association (formally known as American Association for Counseling and Student Development). (1988). Ethical standards of the American Association for Counseling and Development. Alexandria, VA: Author.

American Educational Research Association. (1985). Standards for educational and psychological testing. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association and National Council on Measurement in Education.

American Psychological Association. (1992). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. Washington, DC: Author. See also:
a. Casebook on ethical principles of psychologists. (1987).
b. Ethical principles in the conduct of research with human participants. (1982).
c. General guidelines for providers of psychological services. (1987).
d. Guidelines for computer based tests and interpretations. (1987).
e. Guidelines for providers of services to ethnic, linguistic, and culturally diverse populations. (1990).
f. Specialty guidelines for the delivery of services by clinical psychologists, counseling psychologists, industrial/organizational psychologists, and school psychologists. (1981).
g. Standards for educational and psychological testing. (1985).

Bersoff, D.N. (1995). Ethical conflicts in psychology. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

California Association for Marriage and Family Therapists. (1997). Ethical standards for marriage and family therapists. (rev.ed.). San Diego, CA: Author.

California Department of Consumer Affairs. Professional therapy never includes sex. (1997). Available from: Publications Office, P.O. Box 310, Sacramento, CA 95802.

Caudill, O.B. & Pope, K.E. (1995). Law and mental health professionals: California. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Joint Committee on Testing Practices. (1988). Code of fair testing practices in education. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Kalichman, S.C. (1993). Mandated reporting of suspected child abuse: Ethics, law, & policy. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Lakin, M. (1991). Coping with dilemmas in psychotherapy. New York: Pergamon.

Moline, M.E., Williams, G.T., & Austin, K.M. (1998). Documenting psychotherapy: Essentials for mental health practioners. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

National Association of Social Workers. (1990). Code of ethics. (Rev.) Silver Springs, MD: Author.

National Association of Social Workers. (1989). Standards of the practice of social work. Silver Springs, MD: Author.

Pope, K.S., & Vasquez, M.J.T. (1991). Ethics in psychotherapy and counseling: A practical guide for psychologists. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Stromberg, C.D., Haggarty, D.J., Leibenluft, R.F., McMillian, M.H., Mishkin, B., Rubin, B.L., & Trilling, H.R. (1988). The psychologists legal handbook. Washington, DC: Council for the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology.

VandeCreek, L., & Knapp, S. (1993). Tarasoff and beyond: Legal and clinical considerations in the treatment of life-endangering patients. (Rev.ed.). Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press.

Woody, R.H. (1997). Legally safe mental health practice. Madison, CT: Psychosocial Press.

D. PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL

1. Professional Staff

Counseling and psychotherapy functions are performed by licensed professionals with at least a master's degree from disciplines which include, counseling, psychology and social work.

a. When graduate-level interns and trainees are included for the delivery of psychological services, their work must be closely supervised in accordance with the intern's/trainee's professional specialty and state statutes. Responsibility for the scope and quality of services lies with the professional staff supervisor, the training director, and ultimately the director of the center.

b. Both professional staff members and interns/trainees must have access to necessary consultation resources in areas such as: psychopharmacology, psychological assessment, case management and program development. Specialists in psychiatry, disabilities, law, occupational information, and substance abuse are important resource professionals for the psychological services staff.

2. Status of Professional Staff Within the Community College

It is expected that professional staff members be accorded rights and privileges consistent with community college faculty. This may include tenure (or its equivalent) and the opportunity for representation on community college governing bodies. Sabbatical, educational, or professional leaves should also be available.

3. Qualifications and Competencies: Director of Psychological Services

The director must hold a current license to practice psychotherapy.

a. It is desirable that the director have a doctorate in counseling, psychology, social work or education.

b. The director who supervises interns must meet the minimum requirements as stipulated by state law.

c. The director must be able to represent mental health issues effectively to the college community.

4. **Duties: Director**

a. Overall administration and coordination of the resources and activities of the center including assessment and diagnosis, psychological counseling, outreach, consultation, and preventive mental health activities. The director develops and implements philosophy, policies and procedures of psychological services.

b. Coordination, recruitment, training, supervision, development, and evaluation of professional, interns and support staff.

c. Preparation and administration of budget; submission of annual reports; preparation of reports and documents representing the psychological service needs of the college community.

d. Provision of crisis intervention, psychological counseling, outreach, and consultation services to the college community.

e. Involvement in college policy formation and program development which educates the campus in its response to mental health-related issues and promotes an environment conducive to healthy growth and development.

f. Evaluation of psychological services.

5. **Qualifications and Competencies: Professional Staff**

Professional staff members must hold a current license to practice psychotherapy.

a. Professional staff must be able to understand the person in the context of a diverse social and cultural milieu, and be able to communicate effectively with a wide range of students, faculty, staff and administrators.

b. Professional staff who supervise interns must meet the minimum requirements as stipulated by state law.

6. **Duties: Professional Staff**

a. Provide crisis intervention, assessment and diagnosis, and psychological counseling.

b. Design and conduct developmental and outreach program activities that will facilitate student growth.

c. Provide consultation to student groups, faculty, and staff on mental health issues.

d. Participate in research and service evaluation activities.

e. Provide necessary training and supervision to interns and trainees.

f. Perform other assigned functions that contribute to psychological services and the academic mission of the institution, (e.g. training, committee work, liaison with administrators, faculty and staff).

7. **Duties: Interns and Trainees**

Interns and trainees perform various functions within the scope of their training and experience.

8. **Support Staff**

a. Support staff who deal directly with students should be selected carefully because they often make preliminary decisions about students' disposition.

b. Support staff must have training and adhere to the ethical and legal standards of confidentiality.

E. RELATED GUIDELINES

1. Professional Development

Ongoing professional development activities are an essential aspect of an effective psychological services program. Released time and budget resources should be made available to support staff in continuing education activities.

a. Staff members should hold membership in and participate in appropriate professional organizations.

b. Staff members should attend relevant campus colloquia, as well as professional meetings on the local, state and national level.

c. Psychological services should maintain ongoing in-service training activities (e.g. regular case presentations, discussion of issues, etc.).

d. Staff members should be encouraged and supported in accepting leadership responsibilities within their respective professional organizations and in participating in community activities related to their profession.

2. Staffing Practices

a. Equal Opportunity: staffing should be free of discrimination based on race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or physical challenge. Every effort should be made to recruit and hire staff with expertise in working with persons characteristic of the demographics of students.

b. Size: staffing levels should be periodically monitored with regard to student enrollment and service demands to ensure that program objectives are met.

c. Workload: staff members should have a balanced workload that affords time for all aspects of their professional functions.

3. Physical Facilities

It is desirable that psychological services be centrally located and readily accessible to all students.

a. Individual sound-proofed offices should be provided for each professional staff member and intern. Each office should have a telephone, an inter-office communication system, audio or video recording equipment, locked file area,

bookcase, and furniture that create a professional environment for students.

b. Each professional staff member should have access to computers to support report writing, record keeping, media presentations, and assessment materials.

c. There should be a reception area that provides a comfortable and private waiting area for students with access to psycho-educational information.

d. Records must be kept in a secure, locked area.

e. An area should be available for assessment, group psychological counseling and staff meetings.